Leys News

Delivered FREE to over 5000 homes across the Leys

Issue 58 - December 2007

KC's dancers sweep the board

A group of young dancers from the Leys return from "the Olympics of street dance" with a clutch of medals.

DANCERS FROM Blackbird Leys have achieved international fame at the World Hip-Hop Championships. Young people from KC's School of Dance, run by Leys resident Kelly Chandler, won a collection of awards at the event, held in Germany in October.

Nine young people from KC's School of Dance represented England in the championships, colloquially known as "the Olympics of street dance". The event attracted seven thousand people, who filled a giant hall in Bremen, Germany.

Five of the nine dancers from KC's School of Dance (Sharna Clarke, Sophie Stallard, Kada Marshall, Kelsei Yates, and Latisha Harrison) competed as a group and were placed sixth in the world in the group dance category.

Individual dancers also did very well in the championships. Ten-year-old Kada Marshall, who lives in Rose Hill, was placed 8th in the world in the under-12s category. Meanwhile, Elise Clair was placed 40th in the world in the under-16s category – an even more impressive achievement when you take into account the fact that she only recently turned 12 and is only just old enough for the category.

All nine of the competitors who went with Kelly to Germany are from East Oxford. Six are from Blackbird Leys, one is from Cowley and one is from Rose Hill. To get as far as the World Hip-Hop Championships, all nine dancers first had to win the UK street dance finals, held in Croydon in July. The UK finals saw Kada Marshall and Kyron Anthony crowned British female number one and British male number one in the under-12 category.

KC's School of Dance is based in Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre on Pegasus Road. About 40 children regularly attend the dance sessions, of whom the youngest is eight years old. Kelly believes that learning street dance is good for children's development: "I pride myself on giving kids confidence – it helps them with life and general social skills."

Kelly herself is a single mum living on Field Avenue with her son Harvey, 3. She has a down-to-earth attitude about her dancers: "I'm just a normal person, and the dancers are just ordinary people too – but they're doing extraordinary things and I'm really proud of them."

When the triumphant dancers returned from Germany, they had just a couple of weeks before the next event – the annual meeting for Street Dance International, the organisation for British dancers who compete globally. Kelly is on the committee for Street Dance International and helped to organise the meeting, so the natural choice was to hold it in Blackbird Leys. Dancers from all over the country flocked to Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre in November for a day of dancing and meeting each other.

The next project for KC's School of Dance is a performance at the London Palladium. They had a very successful show earlier this year and plan to repeat the success in April 2008. Rehearsals begin in January. As Kelly puts it: "It's really good to be giving kids such different experiences. A lot of them have made friends all over the country. They're well known in the street dance community – like little superstars! But they take it all in their stride."

Extreme Makeover

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Leys News lady loses locks

OUR INTREPID office manager has gone bald - and it's all for a good cause. In the October issue of Leys News, we told readers that Anna Pavelin was planning to shave off all her hair to raise money for a cancer charity. After gathering together some pledges of sponsorship, Anna took the plunge and had all her hair razored off while on holiday in India.

Anna told Leys News: "Taking the plunge and getting my head shaved was scary enough in itself, but what made it scarier was that I had it done in the old-fashioned way with a sharp knife – none of your safety razors for me!"

All the money raised will go to Maggie's Centre Oxford, a small charity based in the Churchill Hospital in Headington, which helps people with cancer to cope psychologically with their condition. Anna explains that raising money for Maggie's Centre Oxford is her way of saying thank-you for the way the staff helped her father's wife Moira while she was recovering from breast cancer.

So far Anna has raised £100 from sponsorship, but it's not too late to help her raise more. Her goal is to collect £250 and present it to the charity before Christmas. If you would like to help Anna reach her fundraising target, you can contact her at the Leys News office on 01865 711756.

***Below:* Before - Anna with her thick mane of hair**
***Left:* After - Bald is beautiful**

. . . Letters . . .

Big houses don't just appear
Are you SERIOUSLY illustrating the housing crisis in the Leys (and beyond) and the council's inability to meet its statutory housing requirements with a story about a woman who has SIX children ("Hidden housing crisis in the Leys", Issue 57)? Six children who by definition she cannot afford, as if she could she would not be housed by the Council in a three bedroom house and looking to upgrade, but would presumably be paying private rent or her own mortgage.

As a working taxpayer I fully support the need to subsidise people who cannot afford a reasonable quality of life, and would even go so far as being prepared to contribute towards any woman having a child. However, I'm astounded that no link was drawn between the selfishness of having six children (regardless of whether you can afford them or not) and there being a lack of housing.

'The Council' does not have any money - like central government, it simply redistributes that of the taxpayer. Five-bedroom houses for all do not simply 'appear'- they have to be paid for in council spending, which means the money can't be spent elsewhere. This doesn't affect the (relatively) well off working people like myself, as we can afford to pay for services out of our own pockets (unfair as this is when we've already paid for them through taxes).

So next time you can't get childcare, respite for an elderly relative, complain that your bin isn't emptied often enough; that play areas are not maintained, or that the greenbelt is to be built on, ask yourself if everyone 'deserves' to have several children and to be housed in a spacious home.

Dan, Greater Leys

Take some pride in where you live
I write to you as a former anti-litter campaigner asking that your paper support the "Keep Blackbird Leys Litter Free" campaign which was being run by the Parish Council.

The other day I watched as a girl, a Peers school pupil and old enough to know better, just dropped a crisp packet on the road. When I asked her to pick it up, her comment was "It's only Blackbird Leys." I remonstrated further, her passing other comments before her companion went back, picked it up - and then proceeded to drop it when they rounded the corner. They must have passed a bin on their way to school.
It's a real shame that work done by some former members of the Parish Council is now being eroded and the estate looking awful with the rubbish on the streets.
Why can't people use rubbish bins is the question and take some pride in where they live?

Brian Lester

Council refuse policy is rubbish
I was very concerned by the recent news that Oxford academic Dr Francis Kennett was taken to the magistrates court for non-payment of council tax when she protested against fortnightly rubbish collections. She was withholding some of her payment because she believed that less frequent collections were causing a rat problem in her home. I believe there should be a petition amongst Leys people because it is a great concern for all of us to force to pay high taxes and receive less services from the council in the name of environmental and green or some other stuff.

Sheila Khan

Where is Tiana?
Leys News did a piece on a very talented young girl singer in 2003-2004 who won the talent spot at the Kassam Stadium CDI Project. She won it and then got to perform on the Fox FM stage at the Leys Fair. I know that she is also a very talented dancer as well. What has happened to her? I think she was also nominated as hero of the year by your paper too. I heard from a group of pensioners that she danced at an Afro-Caribbean event for the elderly in Cowley Centre.

It would be lovely to catch up and find out what this very talented girl is doing and for us your readers to know what this young star is doing now. I hope that she is still singing. Her name, I think, was Tiana. It would be lovely to hear about her. She couldn't have been more than six years old. My friend brings me a copy of the Leys News and by the way you are all doing a great job, keep it up.

D. Larbi, Northway

This letter arrived just after our October issue went to press, so the writer didn't realise that we had in fact just caught up with Tiana J in our feature about urban dance group Messy Jam (page 24, Oct 07). She is still living in Blackbird Leys and having great success with Messy Jam as well as being a singer and dancer in her own right. We promise to keep you updated on Tiana and the rest of the group. Ed.

The writers of the letters on this page will each shortly be receiving a box of delicious doughnuts, donated Krispy Kreme at Oxford Castle. If you would like to be in line for a similar melt-in-the-mouth treat, simply write to us, letting us know what's on your mind. The writers of published letters will get a tasty prize!

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Deserving a boost

As you read this, volunteers at Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground will know the result of a life-changing decision for the children's activity centre. We explain why they're such a worthy candidate for the People's Millions, whether or not they win.

WALK INTO Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground (also known as BLAP) and the first thing you'll notice is the hive of activity. Children are everywhere, indoors and outdoors: painting, drawing, singing and enjoying themselves on the outdoor play equipment. Project leader Alston Quammie takes it all in his stride, barely pausing for breath between supervising a messy painting session and helping a girl with her computer skills. But look closer and you see that BLAP's lively atmosphere belies its tired surroundings.

Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground was one of the first after-school clubs on the estate when it was set up 31 years ago. It provided a lifeline for bored children and isolated parents at a time when Blackbird Leys had a tiny fraction of the facilities available today, and has remained extremely popular ever since.

However, funding for the playground has never reflected BLAP's status as a treasured Blackbird Leys institution. A substantial amount of the outdoor play equipment has not been replaced since the playground first opened three decades ago. "Some of the children playing here now are the grandchildren of the kids who came here when it first opened," says Alston, "and they're playing on the same equipment as their grandparents."

BLAP receives funding from Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Children in Need and other trusts. This money provides various services (including an after-school club and holiday club), heavily subsidised to be affordable to parents on low incomes. However, current funding only barely covers running costs and won't help with the refurbishment that the playground desperately needs.

But on November 27th, Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground may have received a lifeline. The playground made it through to the regional finals of The People's Millions, a televised competition where people vote to say which organisations should receive an award. By the time you read this, BLAP may have won £80,000. Leys News is unable to bring you the result of the phone vote in this edition because we went to press a week before it took place. However, the result will appear on our website (www.leysnews.co.uk) as soon as it is known.

If they receive the money, BLAP will be spending it on a variety of things, all adding up to what they describe as "a complete makeover". New play structures are a must, including chin-up bars, a jelly board and a new rope bridge. There is also the costly but important task of installing Playsafe surfacing to reduce the risk of falling injuries. New fencing will help to keep vandals off the site, while a pathway for wheelchair access will allow children who use wheelchairs to take part in what BLAP has to offer.

The number of children who use the playground - about 80 in the school holidays - is testament to how important it is to people's lives. But the number of adults who volunteer there shows just how much public goodwill there is towards BLAP on the Leys. The entire management committee, as well as many workers at the playground, are unpaid volunteers. By the time you read this, time will have told us whether that goodwill has been enough to get BLAP voted the People's Millions regional winner.

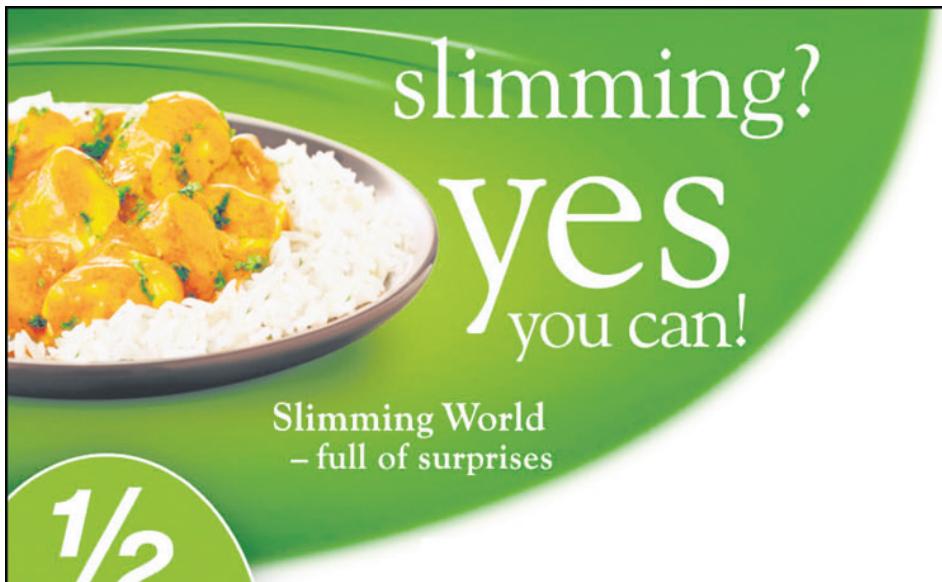
Left to right: Friends Chole, Emily, and Shannon have fun on the play equipment. Shannon, 9, says: "I Like coming to the adventure playground because they've got a zip wire and there aren't many playgrounds that have that." Chloe, 7, says: "I think they should give the money to BLAP because it's more fun than anywhere else."

Dog Menace

AGGRESSIVE DOGS ARE attacking pets on the Leys, according to police community support officers (PCSOs). At the October meeting of Blackbird Leys Parish Council, PCSOs reported that large dogs such as pit bull terriers have been attacking cats and smaller dogs in parks around the Leys. Officers believe that the owners of the aggressive dogs are allowing and possibly even encouraging their dogs' behaviour.

Ricardo Marshall, a parish councillor and Greater Leys resident, reported that while walking his dog in Gillians Park, they were approached by a large dog which made as if to attack. However, the aggressive dog stopped short of an attack, possibly because it realised that Mr Marshall's dog was the bigger of the two.

PCSOs are working with the RSPCA to control the problem. Anyone witnessing aggressive behaviour by dogs on the Leys is asked to report the behaviour by ringing the RSPCA on 0870 5555999 or speaking to a PCSO in person.



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Friday 28th	Normal	0700 - 2300
Saturday 29th	Normal	0700 - 2300
Sunday 30th	Normal	0700 - 2300
Monday 30st	News Years Eve	0700 - 2200
Tuesday 1st Jan	New Years Day	0900 - 2100
Wednesday 2nd	Normal	0700 - 2300

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A sparkling vision of the Leys

Free community art workshop allows residents to unleash their imagination

HAVE YOU EVER dreamed about a different vision of the Leys? A forthcoming art workshop allows residents to create a fantasy Leys landscape in paint and textiles.

The free art workshop, run by Blackbird Leys Arts Group (BLAG) will be held at Blackbird Leys Community Centre on December 9th. The plan is to create a six-metre frieze depicting residents' ideas of how a fantasy street in the Leys could look.

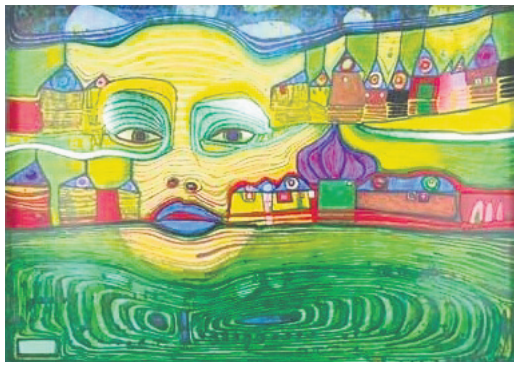
The style of the frieze will be inspired by Austrian artists Friedensreich Hundertwasser and Horst Kordes, both famous for their intense colours and free-flowing fantasy landscapes. Jane Whiting, one of BLAG's professional artists, said: "We want to create scenes of curviness with much sparkle and warmth."

The project is funded by Awards for All, which means that BLAG are able to make the whole workshop free to any residents who would like to join in. Although the workshop is mainly aimed at adults, accompanied children will be very welcome too.

The frieze created at the workshop will become part of the "50 years of the Leys" art exhibition in spring 2008.

The art workshop will be held in the Glow Hall, Blackbird Leys Community Centre, Blackbird Leys Road on Sunday December 9th from 12pm-4pm. It will be part of the Blackbird Leys 50th anniversary celebrations taking place in the hall on that day.

For more information ring Jane Whiting on 07977 539336



Left: "Irinaland over the Balkans" by Friedensreich Hundertwasser

Far left: a detail of a painting by Horst Kordes

Balloon will go up at community centre

A MOSAIC CELEBRATING 50 years of the estate is nearing completion. The mosaic project, run by Leys Learning Community, involved local volunteers meeting regularly to work with brightly-coloured ceramics. As Leys News went to press, the image they created of a giant hot-air balloon in warm reds and yellows was very nearly finished. The mosaic will be erected on the side of Blackbird Leys Community Centre in the middle of December.

Shrieks of delight at Time Team exhibition

THE LEYS TIME TEAM have bounced back from a summer setback to hold a successful exhibition.

The group was set up to capture people's memories by putting old photos and stories into a digital archive. But disaster struck in the summer when a computer crash destroyed all the archiving work that had been done so far.

But the Time Team didn't give up. They appealed through Leys News and the Oxford Mail for contributors to come back and hand over their photos again.

They also received a boost when the Oxford Mail donated a large number of photos from the newspaper's own archives.

The hard work paid off. By the time the first Time Team photo exhibition took place at Blackbird Leys Community Centre in November, they had collected over 100 photos to exhibit. There were shrieks of delight and embarrassment as people recognised themselves, parents and friends in the old photos on display.

The atmosphere at the event was enhanced by the free food as well as activities for the children: badge making, face painting and videos.

If you couldn't be there this time, don't worry: there will be an even bigger exhibition running from the 8th December to the 15th December in the same place, where you will have another chance to see photos covering the history of Blackbird Leys.

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. . . What's on in the Leys . . .

The What's On section is getting bigger and better. It's now organised by topic instead of by date, so you can go straight to the section that interests you. We've also changed the name because "What's On Weekly" doesn't give scope for less regular events. Leys News also has plans to display event listings on our brand new website (www.leysnews.co.uk). So please keep telling us about any events you'd like us to publicise. It's an easy and completely free way of telling thousands of Leys residents about your event.

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Leys Kiddie Club works in partnership with the Dovecote Voluntary Parent Committee and now runs in the Dovecote Family Drop in Room, Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays & Fridays, 9.30am until 2.30pm. Cost: 75p per drop-in. Contact Ruth Brown on 07985 637487.

Beavers (aged 6-8) meet at the Blackbird Leys Scout Hut on Sandy Lane. Tuesdays 5pm-6pm. Ring (01865) 714104.

Cubs (aged 8-10½) meet at the Blackbird Leys Scout Hut on Sandy Lane. Tuesdays 6.30pm-8pm. Ring (01865) 714104.

Dovecote After School Club for 4-12 year olds is Monday-Thursday, 3.15pm-5pm, at the Dovecote. Cost: 75p per session.

The Barn Youth Project Session for ages 7 to 12 is on Mondays 5.30-7.30pm. Wednesdays is for young people aged 13 to 20 and runs from 7pm-9pm.

Blackbird Leys Youth Centre, Blackbird Leys Road. Variety of activities and advice for young people. Contact on (01865) 772886.

Scouts (aged 10½-15 ½) at the Blackbird Leys Scout Hut on Sandy Lane. Thursdays 7pm-8.30pm. Ring (01865) 714104.

Cheerleading for girls aged 6 and over is at the Leisure Centre on Pegasus Road. Tuesdays 4.30pm. 50p a session. Run by the Leys Youth Programme. Contact Matt and Katie Gamble on (01865) 427075.

5-a-side football for girls is at the Leisure Centre on Fridays. 5-6pm for years 3-6. 6-7pm for years 7 upwards. 50p a session. Run by the Leys Youth Programme. Contact Matt and Katie Gamble on (01865) 427075.

5-a-side football for boys is at the Leisure Centre on Fridays. 4-5pm for school years 3 to 6. 5-6pm for years 7 to 9. 6-7pm for years 10 and 11. 50p a session.
Run by the Leys Youth Programme. Contact Matt and Katie Gamble on (01865) 427075.

Starlight Black Child Mixed Heritage Group meets every Wednesday during term time at Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground between 5pm and 6:30pm. The group provides a safe forum to explore issues of race and racism with other parents and occasional guest speakers, while the children have fun playing and getting to know each other.

CHURCHES

Church of the Holy Family is on Cuddesdon Way. Sunday service at 10-11am with lively children's church. Evening service most Sundays at 6.30pm. The Church of the Holy Family is a local ecumenical partnership of Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, Moravian and United Reformed denominations. Ring (01865) 396241.

Leys Community Church. Sunday service at the Holy Family Church. Includes special activities for children and young people. Starts at 3.30pm. Contact Richard and Kate Colbrook (01865) 714153.

Sacred Heart Catholic Church is on Sawpit Road. Sunday Mass is at 9.30am and 6pm. Ring (01865) 778454.
COMPUTERS

COMPUTERS

The BLITZ (Blackbird Leys IT Zone) runs a drop-in where you can turn up and get online! Brush up on word-processing and spreadsheets, or simply surf the web. 9:30am-4:30pm Monday to Friday, 10am-1pm Saturdays. (No drop-in on Sundays.) BLITZ is based in Blackbird Leys Community Centre, Blackbird Leys Road. For more information ring John on 01865 714492.

WELLBEING

The Listening Centre (TLC) COUNSELLING in Cuddesdon Corner Family Centre Mondays 12.30pm - 8.30pmTuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays 5.30pm - 8.30pmFor further details contact the manager on 01865 794794

LEISURE

BBL in stitches sewing group. Free. 6.30 - 9pm Weds. Community art room behind community centre

Boxing training is at the Youth Centre (part of the Leys Linx Centre on Blackbird Leys Road). Tuesday and Thursday evenings, 7.30-9pm. Run by Keith Templar. Contact on (01865) 715815.

Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre is on Pegasus Road. Open Monday-Friday 8am-11pm, Saturday 9am-8pm, Sunday 9am-9pm.
Variety of leisure activities and classes. Rooms and facilities available for private hire. Ring (01865) 467020.

Legs, Bums & Tums is at the Leisure Centre. Wednesdays 6-7pm.

Tae Kwon Do is at the Leisure Centre. Tuesdays 6-7pm.

Body Conditioning is at the Leisure Centre. Mondays 10-11am.

Pilates for Beginners is at the Leisure Centre. Tuesdays 7-7.45pm.

Blackbird Leys Swimming Pool is behind the community centre on Blackbird Leys Road. General swimming times are Mondays & Fridays 5.45-6.45pm, Saturdays & Sundays 11.15am-1pm. Other sessions available include over 60s, women-only, water workout and parent & toddler classes. Ring (01865) 467042.

Irish dancing is at Sacred Heart Hall. Wednesdays and Thursdays, 5pm.

Salsa dancing is at Clementine's Night Club on the Plain. Beginners and improvers welcome. 8pm til late. Ring 07858 860423 for more information.

OLDER PEOPLE

Silver Circle meets at the Blackbird Leys Community Centre on Blackbird Leys Road. Tuesdays 1-3.30pm. Meet for trips, chats, tea, and bingo. Everyone welcome. Ring (01865) 435954.

Golden Circle meets for bingo, trips and tea at the Blackbird Leys Community Centre on Blackbird Leys Road. Thursdays 1pm-3:30pm. Everyone welcome. Ring (01865) 460592.

Monday lunch club for the over-50s is in the Clockhouse, 10am-1.30pm.

Thursday lunch club for the over-50s is at The Barn, 10am-2pm.

Leys Over 60s Club. Holy Family Church Hall. Wednesdays from 1.30pm until 4pm. Meet for trips, bingo, card games, a chat and free refreshments.

Tai chi for the over 50s at the Clockhouse community centre every Thursday, 10am-11am, £1.50, plus free refreshments afterwards (tea & light lunch)
details call 01865 395908 or 07972751317

SLIMMING

Slimming World meets at the leisure centre on Pegasus Road. Thursdays at 7pm. Ring Gill on 01865 730009 for more information.

If you have a regular event that you would like to see in the What's On section, please tell us! Write to What's On, Leys News, 26 Kingfisher Green, Greater Leys, Oxford OX4 7BX.
Or simply e-mail editor@leysnews.co.uk, putting "What's On" in the e-mail's subject heading. We'd love to hear from you.

. . . Church News . . .

The Church of the Holy Family

Any enquiries to: the Rev'd Fleur Houston (774672) and the Rev'd David Parry (778728)
Regular Services: All are welcome to our regular Sunday communion services at 10.00 am - there is special provision for children. And if you prefer a more meditative style of worship why not come along at 6.30 pm, for Time Out - for those of us who need a bit of space.

On Tuesdays at 9.00am we have short morning prayers for anyone to attend. On Wednesdays we have prayers for the Leys community at 1.00 pm.

Every Sunday there are services with Eucharist at 10.00 am; for part of the service, children may attend our lively children's church. At 6.30 pm Time Out is a short reflective service with different styles of worship each week.

The Leys Community Church

The Leys Community Church meets at 3.30pm on a Sunday afternoon at the Church of the Holy Family. Meetings include special activities for children and young people. Please phone Richard and Kate Colbrook on 01865 714153 for more details.

Sacred Heart Catholic Church

Serving Blackbird Leys, Greater Leys, Garsington and Cuddesdon. Fr. David Hartley, Tel 01865 779658.
Regular Services:
Sundays: Masses 9.30am and 6.00pm
Mondays: Mass 9.00am
Tuesdays: Rosary 7.00pm and Mass 7.30pm
Thursdays: Adoration 6.30pm, and Mass 7.00pm
Fridays: Mass 9.00am
Saturday: Mass 10.00am, and Confessions 10.30am

Sacred Heart Sky Dive 2007

22nd September 2007
We recently had a unique and exciting chance to sky dive, and raise funds for Sacred Heart parish. Our church needs to provide a disabled access WC, and in addition we will be improving the building with a ground floor counselling room for the priest, or others, to talk in confidence, and other much needed extra space.

Following a good response to the idea from Phil Mold to hold a sky dive session at the local sky dive centre at Weston on the Green, we had three members of our church totally supported by the parish, friends and families, sky dive from some 1300 feet. In doing so they raised £2546 for the church and have ever lasting memories of a great day.

Following this fantastic success we will be holding another skydive event in July 2008, watch this space for more information.

shskydive@tiscali.co.uk

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If you live on the Leys, the people named on this page will be really happy to talk to you about learning or training.

Ruskin College
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Beryl Stewart
01865 517807
bstewart@ruskin.ac.uk

Oxford University
www.ox.ac.uk
Bury the old town/ gown divide. Oxford is keen to take on people from non-traditional background, offering short courses locally
Rosie Martin
01865 280355
rosie.martin@conted.ox.ac.uk

Oxford Brookes University
www.brookes.ac.uk
Offer tasters and introductory higher education modules at special rates for Leys residents
Marie Jones
01865 484866
Marie.jones@brookes.ac.uk

Learning is for everyone

The Open University
www.open.ac.uk
Higher Education qualifications in your own time and space, also short courses here on the Leys
Fiammetta Crucioli
01865 327000
Ext 62134
f.crucioli@open.ac.uk

Adult Learning

Information Advice and Guidance
Cecily Lee
01865 798081
cecily.lee@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Margaret Darbyshire
01235 524841
mdarbyshire@cfbt.com

Community English School in East Oxford
For speakers of other languages living in Oxford who want to learn English
Phone 728688

Learning helps me make new friends

Oxford Women's Training Scheme
Helen McLuckie
01865 550227
hmcluckie@ocuc.ac.uk

Oxford and Cherwell Valley College
www.ocvc.ac.uk
Campus in BBL (trade skills) and in Oxford City with many more courses
Joanne Worthington
01865 551801
worthington@ocvc.ac.uk

ABLE Centre
Improve your basic English and Maths in very small and friendly learning groups
Annette Powell
01865 776334

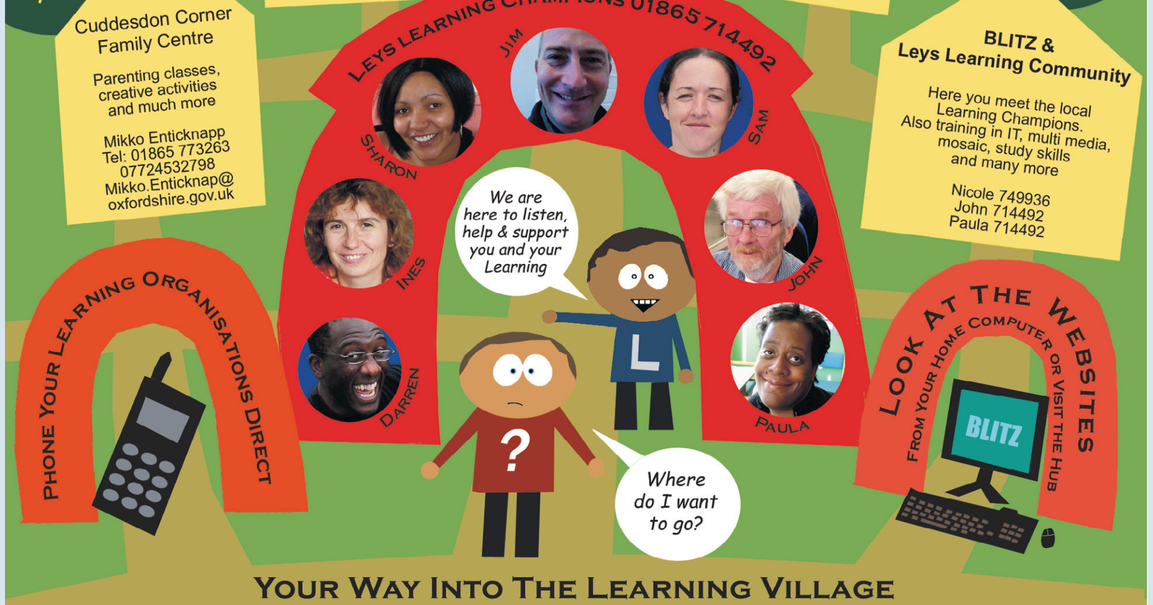
Schools on the Leys
Great courses for parents
Windale: 01865 777 796
Sarah Collingwood or Jo Collier
Orchard Meadow:
01865 778 609
Tanya Wiseman
Pegasus: 01865 777 175
Anne Wells

Learning makes me fell good about myself

Learning can be great fun

Cuddesdon Corner Family Centre
Parenting classes, creative activities and much more
Mikko Enticknapp
Tel: 01865 773263
07724532798
Mikko.Enticknap@oxfordshire.gov.uk

BLITZ & Leys Learning Community
Here you meet the local Learning Champions. Also training in IT, multi media, mosaic, study skills and many more
Nicole 749936
John 714492
Paula 714492



Your Way Into The Learning Village

Whatever skills you are interested in developing come and have a chat with one of our local volunteer learning champions in the Blackbird Leys Community Centre. We will help you to find out what is the best course to take and what support might be available. We are friendly, down to earth, approachable and here to help you to make the first step back into learning if it is what you want.

Thanks to Oxford Brookes University for sponsoring this page.
If you are interested in studying at Oxford Brookes please contact Marie Jones on 01865 484866 or marie.jones@brookes.ac.uk

Communication is key to unlock potential

Oxford represents the pinnacle of academic achievement for the chosen few – but many people feel shut out of learning here. Kate Griffin meets Poppy Shirlaw, director of a new English language school that aims to change all that.

From burgers to business: Jeromos went from working in McDonalds to being a self-employed gardener and decorator

THINK ABOUT THE last interaction you had with bureaucracy. Perhaps you were collecting child benefit or sorting out a new phone line after moving house. Chances are, the experience was a bit tedious and time-consuming, and possibly quite frustrating – but imagine how much worse it would be if you had to conduct the whole transaction in a foreign language. That is the reality of life for a lot of people who live on the Leys but don't speak English as their first language.

Poppy Shirlaw, director and founder of Kheiron School of English, explains the problem. "When you're not proficient in English, simple things like going to the shops or seeing a doctor can be intimidating. That affects your confidence and makes it harder for you to make a life here."

The problem is that many English language teaching schools aren't equipped to help pupils cope with everyday life. Worse still, many potential pupils find themselves priced out of English learning by high charges. Kheiron School of English aims to change all that by charging very low fees (£5 an hour at the moment) and having small class sizes (usually between three and ten students) to place the emphasis on individuals.

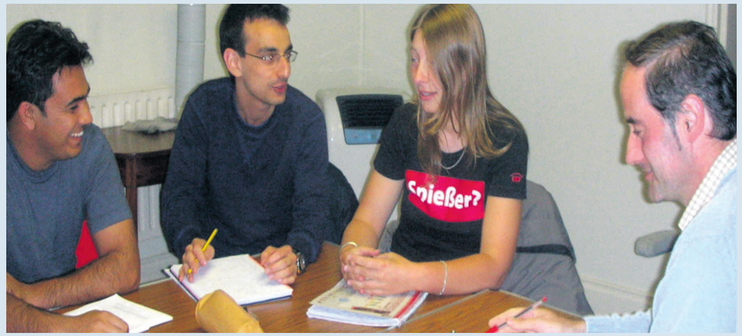
"The lessons are very personal," says Poppy, "and before taking on a student, we always meet for coffee and a chat to find out about them – their background and ability – before deciding on what level to start them at." All 35 of the students currently at Kheiron live in East Oxford, many in Blackbird Leys.

The overall aim of the school is to help immigrants integrate into their new country by allowing them to communicate, make friends and achieve their career potential here. Students receive help with filling in job application forms and writing their CVs as well as straightforward English teaching.

"A lot of our students aren't happy in their current jobs because they're not really using their skills," says Poppy. She gives the example of Maria*, a Spanish woman who gained a physics degree in her home country. When she came to Kheiron School, she was working in a bar on Cowley Road and not using any of her degree skills. Now she has gained enough confidence in English to apply for other jobs, and has been offered a position in the environmental studies department at Oxford Brookes University.

Jeromos is another student who is now working in his chosen area. When he first arrived in the UK, he worked in McDonalds but longed to be doing more fulfilling work. After three months of studying at Kheiron, he recently set up his own gardening and decorating business. He says: "It is very important to learn everyday words. I need English to go shopping - on the bus, in the street, and at the bank. I love using the new words that I have leant in the lessons. It helps me to make friends, to chat and socialise." The school has been running for less than a year, but already has a heap of success stories. It seems that the key to achieving integration is allowing people to fulfil their individual potential.

**Not her real name*



Join the Leys Communiversity Programme

Starting in January there will be several opportunities to get a taste of studying at university level, organised with the Leys Learning Community. Whether one of the subjects takes your fancy or you would like to get some study skills and support with a view to studying for a degree in October 2008 or 2009, get in touch for more details and to reserve your place.

Bridging Programme

A 10 week programme running on Wednesdays from 23rd January 9.30am to 2.30pm, to give you a taste and build your confidence towards studying at university level. This is run jointly with Oxford and Cherwell College; Oxford Brookes and Aim Higher. It includes visits to Brookes and OCVC, some taster sessions and a chance to work on your own short project for presentation. A really good first step towards HE study.

Oxford Brookes

Brookes will be offering places via the Leys Learning Community on their Film Realisation 1 module in January. The module is part of a performing arts degree and gives you the opportunity to direct and produce a short film. Last year Leys students produced some of the best work so Brookes are keen to work with us again. Get in touch as soon as possible.

Become a Brookes Associate Student – Oxford Brookes has agreed that anyone from the Leys can register on any of their stage 1(first year) modules as an associate student for only £10. This is an amazing offer only available through the Leys Learning Community. It won't get you a full degree (because you would have to do some stage 2 modules) but would get you well on the way.

We will also be offering other HE learning opportunities with Oxford University and Ruskin College.

Tasters with the Open University

Open University offers a flexible route to a degree which can be a lot easier to fit around work and family life. They offer some introductory courses called "Openings" which will be running in March. But as a taster the Open University is offering four tasters in January and February for Leys residents. The tasters run from 10.00-1.30pm including lunch and child-care can be arranged if you let us know in advance. The tasters being offered are:

Tuesday 24th January – "Understanding Children"

Thursday 29th January – "Starting Psychology"

Tuesday 7th February – "Understanding Health"

Thursdays 12th February – "Understanding Society"

To book a place on these programmes please contact the Leys Learning Community on 01865 749 932 or 714 492 or call Fiammetta Crucioli of the Open University on 01865 327000 (extension 62134)

BLITZ

BLITZ (Blackbird Leys IT Zone) will be running some exciting new courses in the new year. Training courses beginning in 2008 include:

- IT for beginners
- Web design
- Using a digital camera
- Photoshop picture editing
- PC maintenance

All courses are **FREE**. For more information about all the opportunities available, contact John at BLITZ on 01865 714492.

Christmas Dinner

With the Peoples People

Last year we had a great time, come and join us this year

Christmas Day - 25th December 2007

Blackbird Leys Community Centre

12 noon - 7pm @ The Glow Hall

Tickets - £1 per adult, 50p per child, £2 per family

Ticket enters raffle to win Hamper

For tickets call or go to

Lex: 07789 656 044 - Sasha: 07917 704 320

CDI Office: 395 927 - Glow Hall: 749 936 - Leys Linx Centre: 714 492

Sponsored sleep-out will help Masai tribe

A woman from Blackbird Leys will be spending a wintry night outdoors to raise money for people in Kenya. Kimberley Russell tells Leys News why she's doing it.

HI, MY NAME is Kimberley Russell. I have lived on Blackbird Leys most of my life. After being brought up in a diverse background myself and coming through it in a positive way, I decided I would like to help young people who were going through a struggle themselves. I decided I would like be a residential social worker. Because I have spent time in the care system myself, I know that the benefit of support and care is the dynamic for change in a young person.

I went to Ruskin College when I was 22 and at 23 I became a residential social worker. I have worked for Social Services for seven years now and I fully enjoy my vocation; it is very rewarding. After helping so many young people in my own community I felt I would like to help young people in other parts of the world also. Africa was a place I wanted to help young people who were suffering the affects of HIV and AIDS. I found a project in Bungoma, Kenya, which was really in need of outside help.

I will be staying in Bungoma for one month. The trip cost me £700 which is a direct contribution to the project. I will be staying in a mud hut with a Masai tribe. I will be working a nine-hour day teaching the locals AIDS awareness, teaching English and helping to generate money for the local community in order that they may build a farm which will feed as well as generate an income for the villagers. I really wanted the young people of Blackbird Leys to be involved in this so they could have a better understanding of the hardship that the young people of Bungoma suffer on a daily basis.

There will be a sponsored sleep out on 1st December (World Aids Day) at Blackbird Leys Community Centre. With the help, support and ideas of volunteers we will have 'roughed it' and had an action packed camping out evening of games, nail art, DVDs, t-shirt making, singing, midnight feast and a great fry up in the morning! It's going to be fun for us and our fun is going to help many young people in Bungoma.

Did you know £30 of sponsorship money raised can buy thirty chickens for a farm in Bungoma? This will produce enough eggs to feed the village for as long as the chickens live - years!

You can help support our project by sponsoring us. Please call Kimberley Russell on 01865 420017. I can take sponsorship money up to 30th January 2008. I leave for Bungoma on 1st Feb 08 and will be there for one month. I shall be making a video documentary so you will be able to see what it is your donations are contributing to.

I would also like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to Lex Francis and Darren James for their constant support in making this camping out night possible. They truly are my support angels.

Debt advice warning

CONSUMERS HAVE BEEN warned about an unlicensed organisation that sent out misleading debt advice. The IVA Council (IVAC) sent out letters to individuals who were in individual voluntary arrangement (IVA) agreements, advising them to stop their payments.

Worryingly, the letters suggested that debtors should stop their payments without informing the Insolvency Practitioner (IP), despite the fact that failure to do this could end the IVA prematurely and even result in the debtor being made bankrupt for not complying with the terms of the agreement.

The IVAC admitted that it was "foolish" to advise debtors to stop making individual voluntary arrangement (IVA) payments. Jonathan Baker, auditor for IVAC, admitted that it did send out the letters, but said that the aim was to help people who have been mis-sold IVAs by IVA factories. He said that IVAC was set up by "a bunch of disgruntled victims". He told industry publication Credit Today that future marketing from the organisation will not advise people to stop IVAs without warning.

Baker also confirmed that IVAC does act as a "lead generator" for companies offering bankruptcy solutions.

Jim Saunders of Agnes Smith Advice Centre, Blackbird Leys, commented: "There is no easy way out of debt, despite what advertisers tell us. Unfortunately the easy options, as seen on TV or the internet, can often prove to be the worst option or in some instances can create even more debt problems. People need to approach valid organisations with their problems, especially when dealing with complex issues such as insolvency. At the Agnes Smith Advice Centre we regularly help many clients who experience financial difficulties. We provide free and unbiased advice."

Oxfordshire Mind fundraising events:

Clyde Consultancy Christmas Steal

Barry Clyde, Director of Clyde Consultancy Ltd, specialises in Microsoft and Server installations. He has recently approached Oxfordshire Mind and is offering PC's and Laptops at great prices. Barry can also custom build PC's to your requirements. For each PC or Laptop sold, Barry has offered to donate £10 to Oxfordshire Mind.

For further information please see the attached leaflet or contact him direct on 07877 852 843 mentioning our name.

Book your party in the Paddock

Chris and Ann Rawlings are hoping to host parties and weddings in the Paddock from 1st May 2008 through to 30th September 2008. The marquee and paddock can currently host about 100 people and by next spring they aim to have built a kitchen and toilet block and set up as Westfield Events. We are sure everyone would agree that it was a lovely venue for a party so if you have a special party or need a wedding venue please contact Chris or Ann on 01993 867888 *(please mention Oxfordshire Mind at the time of your enquiry and for each booking they receive through us they will make a donation to Oxfordshire Mind - thanks!).*

Sponsored Tandem Sky Dive – anytime!

Do you fancy undertaking the tough challenge of jumping 12,000 feet out of an aeroplane in aid of Oxfordshire Mind. Once you exit the aeroplane you will accelerate to 120mph, covering each thousand feet in approximately five seconds! At 5,000 feet the instructor will deploy a square parachute so you can land softly and gently some four minutes later.

To participate in this event, individuals need to pay a registration fee of just £30 and pledge to raise £450 in sponsorship and through fundraising. A full fundraising pack is issued when you apply.

Justine Gallagher is preparing to run 13 miles for Oxfordshire Mind next Spring.

Justine said "I have just become a volunteer at The Mill (a community resource project run by Oxfordshire Mind for people who are experiencing mental and emotional health problems in Oxford) one day a week and it would be really good to raise money for the organisation I'm involved in so that I can see first-hand the kinds of things the money will go on. I have suffered from mental health problems myself so I know how important it is that charities such as Oxfordshire Mind are well supported by the public. Mental illness can make you feel incredibly isolated and one in four visits to a GP are now mental health related. I did a 10km run in Manchester in June 2007, and by the end of it I wanted to keep running! I was not nearly as worn out as I thought I would be, so that motivated me to want to go further and do the half marathon (approximately 13 miles). I know that Oxfordshire Mind aims to raise at least £30,000 each year to sustain and develop its services and I hope I can do my bit to support them by running in the Grove White Horse Half Marathon in April."

To support Justine please visit www.justgiving.com/ justinegallagher or send donations made payable to 'Oxfordshire Mind - Justine's Run' to 125 Walton Street, Oxford OX2 6AH

Trek Ireland 2009

We are currently in the process of setting up our next trek which will explore the heart and soul of Ireland the Kerry Way! Stretching out into the Atlantic Ocean, the Iveragh Peninsula has a backbone of mighty mountains. Every environment is here, from the snow-capped Corran Tuathail, Ireland's loftiest peak, through woodland and blanket bog, to the sandy beaches of the coast. The trek is planned for 26th - 30th June 2009 and we hope to have the trek poster and brochure ready next month - we will keep you posted!

The registration fee will be £50 and fundraising / sponsorship will be £1,250.

www.oxfordshire-mind.org.uk

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The world looks better in colour

Leys News now offers a colour printing service for community groups. If you have a poster or a newsletter that you think would look better in colour, head over to our Kingfisher Green office and we'll be pleased to help.

Our prices per sheet *(as of December 2007)*

A4 black & white - 10p
A4 colour laser print, low colour (e.g. a letterhead) - 25p
A4 colour laser print, full colour - 40p
A3 black & white - 25p
A3 colour laser print, low colour (e.g. a letterhead) - 50p
A3 colour laser print, full colour - 80p

Discounts are available for print runs of over 10 copies. If you would like to do your printing at Leys News, ring 01865 711756 to arrange it with us. The printing service is only available during our core office hours (9am-3pm, Monday to Thursday).

Green Fingers

By Stuart Mabbutt

Experiments With Vegetables

THIS YEAR seems to have been somewhat an adventurous one, within many of my clients gardens around Oxford. For many have been experimenting with growing vegetables and edible produce within their flower borders.

This is a subject I have covered previously, although rather sketchily. There are numerous explanations as to why many ordinary gardeners would even consider dispensing entirely with the idea of having a designated vegetable plot.

The obvious one is that vegetable plots are notoriously labour intensive, but much of this workload can be relieved if you separate your vegetable plots out into long narrow beds. This system means you are not continually walking on the soil and compacting it, so it can mean there is less need for digging the soil over during the autumn and winter.

Lots of gardeners also raise the point that their vegetable plots often offer up far more produce than they can use or dispose of. Obviously, this leads to large volumes of wasted crops.

Lots of gardeners, further still, prefer to grow flowers to enjoy rather than endless rows of carrots, celeriac or even onions.

So if you are a gardener that falls snugly into the latter category, then growing a few edible plants amongst your flowers is a good option. Lots of vegetables have some ornamental value to them, with the added bonus that you can eat and enjoy them at some point. Giving that extra dimension to your garden.

Some old fashioned runner beans can be used as a flowering climber. Leaf beet can be used for their intensely veined leaves and brightly coloured stems.

Beetroot give a deep and luxurious look to a flower border with their dark leaves and red stems too.

'Step Over' apples, which can grow as low as 1 foot tall, are another medium you can use to add some unexpected interest. You can also plant some herbs throughout your garden, which have culinary uses as well as adding fragrance throughout the garden.

Many of the gardens I maintain have plantings of mixed herbs running throughout the gardens, seeping through the borders like little overlooked streams. Planting in this way gives a theme throughout the garden, and it's a good way of making all the areas of the garden tie in and relate to each other.

Its good to have different areas to a garden, but there needs to be some element that holds the whole thing together and makes it have some sense and reason to it. So when you are sat looking through all those seed catalogues this autumn and winter, maybe think about adding something edible to your borders next year, and joining the adventurous movement that seems to be developing across Oxford.

Happy gardening

Jonny Lost – Alone and Missing – Part 5

Story by the Journeyman, Colin Goundry

The story so far: Jonny has disappeared from home and been picked up by Madaline, a kindly traveller.

WHEN THE EVENING sky shone full of stars, Jonny woke and sat by the fire. He drank tea and ate stew with Madaline and listened to her. He felt safe, at ease with her, as if he had known her all his life. As if he had been here forever. He looked up into the late night sky and felt at peace with the land. They could have been the only people in the world.

The water from the river was the only sound to break the quiet of the night. Madaline glowed with the firelight and Jonny watched her, mesmerised.

They talked all through the night and Madaline told Jonny how she had found him. Scared half to death, cold, lost and alone at the roadside.

Jonny couldn't remember anything. He only remembered his name. "Jonny is my name." His memory of home and his girlfriend Anna had gone. In his dreams he was to see faces and places that he had known. But he couldn't remember where they were from. He could see lanes and streets, great houses and old churches. He dreamt about them all. They came and they went. Soon, though, all Jonny dreamt of was what he'd seen with his beloved Madaline. She was Jonny's only companion, friend and memory.

They moved on and around. They shared the seasons of time and the winters in the hills. It was like a life of dreams to Jonny. He worked hard and learned to live off the land. To build, to fish, to settle for all they needed to live. Madaline taught him it all.

Sarah and Greg were never to know what had become of their loving son, Jonny. Their lives had changed forever and through loss and grief the passage of time was to separate their love for one another. They were to become two strangers, each creating their own world of coping.

Sarah was consumed with depression and was odten seen walking the surrounding lanes alone at night. Desperation and loneliness was to become all she was to feel.

Greg found his own salvation in work. He spent endless hours buried in his job, being unable to think of home and his beloved Sarah, who had never recovered from losing Jonny.

Would they ever be able to rebuild their lives and find out what had happened to their lost son Jonny?

Many springs, summers, autumns and cold winters had passed since Madaline had found Jonny. They had found each other, she thought. She had cared for him and they had seen the country together. It was their world, their way of life. Two lost travellers roaming from town to town, through byways and rocky mountains. They learnt from each other, living off the land and the small living they earned from lucky charms and using their wits. There was no time for modern life's "essentials" on the roadside. No television, books or newspapers. It was the elements that decided their way of life.

Jonny was strong and handsome. He was a gift to Madaline, who had been alone for a long time before she found him. She loved him like her own. In time Jonny would remember and Madaline watched him when the dreams came. He called out and spoke to his mystery friends in those dreams. But Jonny couldn't find the answers. He spoke sometimes of these dreams and Madaline listened.

In late springtime Madaline and Jonny moved on from the barren lands of Devonshire, through Somerset, the Bristol Channel and onwards. Jonny looked over to Madaline and asked her, "Where are we going?" Madaline smiled lovingly at him and said, "To our summer home, Jonny." "You mean Shady Corner Lane, don't you?"

They arrived early that evening. The lane was empty and quiet. Jonny made a fire while Madaline prepared their meal. They were sitting around the fire and the night sky was clear and bright with stars. The wind was cool and light. Madaline looked over at Jonny and said, "This will always be your summer home, Jonny. This is where I found you!"

Occasionally someone would pass them, walking their dog or just out walking. They always called out a greeting. Some would answer or stop and say hello. Others would not. It was the same everywhere they went. On this night a woman walking alone passed them by. Jonny looked over to Madaline and said: "I've seen that face in my dreams."

Christmas Word search

Find more than half the words on the list and we'll enter you into the draw. The first entry out of the hat will receive a £20 voucher, kindly donated by WHSmith in Cowley Centre.

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ADVENT CALENDAR
SLEIGHBELLS
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NEW YEARS DAY
FRANKINCENSE
GOLD
SATURNALIA
MINCEPIES
SNOWMAN
STAR OF BETHLEHEM
STOCKINGS
POINSETTIA
SAINT NICHOLAS

Jade is wordsearch winner

IN THE OCTOBER issue of Leys News, we asked you to complete a pantomime-themed wordsearch in order to win free tickets to the opening night of Aladdin, the Christmas season's treat from Oxford Playhouse.

The first correct entry out of the hat was from Jade Masters, aged 7, from Greater Leys. She wins four tickets (two adult, two child). Jade told Leys News that she is excited to have won because it is the first time she has won a competition. She plans to attend the opening night with her friend Abigail, mum Natalie and Nana.

So many people entered the wordsearch competition that Oxford Playhouse also agreed to offer discounted tickets for the opening night of Aladdin to the first five runners-up.

As Leys News, went to press, the Playhouse team (including director Peter Duncan) were still putting the finishing touches to Aladdin – but as you read this, the panto season will be well under way and Simon Green's Widow Twankey will be delighting young and old alike. The Playhouse team told Leys News that ticket sales this year have been brisk, so you are advised to book early to avoid disappointment. All together now: "He's behind you!"

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Season Greetings to all

Have your say

Is there something you think Leys News should know about? It could be a story you'd like us to cover, or perhaps you just want to tell us what you think of the paper. The Leys News editorial meeting will be held on Thursday 10th January at 2pm at the Blackbird Leys Community Centre. All our editorial meetings are open to the public, so please feel free to come along. There's no need to stay for the whole meeting, either - if you just want to drop in and say hello, you'll be more than welcome.

. . . Leys News Opinion . . .

Thought of the Month . . . .

BY ANNA PAVELIN

A COLLEAGUE TOLD me recently that she sometimes catches Thought For The Day on Radio 4, and starts listening to what sounds like an interesting, perfectly rational person talking about some topic relevant to modern life. Then, suddenly, there is a gear shift and it goes all religious and she has to turn off in disgust. So to Kate and others who are allergic to religion look out for this symbol:

It's a sign for you to stop reading and go and make a cup of tea!

I had an American friend staying with me last weekend. She said they (the people living in her area) now say to their loved ones "stay safe" when they leave in the morning, whereas they used to say "have a nice day".

Safety is something that we all wish for our loved ones and for ourselves, but is it possible? What do we mean by 'safe'?

Does it mean nothing bad happening? Parents don't mind their kids tumbling onto the carpet while they are learning to walk, but they do their best to protect their children from a more serious injury. If someone you care about has gone into hospital, the next thing you want to know is is it serious?

If you work as a soldier then what you will think of as a serious injury will be different from those with desk jobs. If a soldier is in a dangerous conflict then getting home safely means getting home alive.

At this time many people think about safety. We are concerned about illnesses, accidents, crime, terrorist attacks, traffic collisions, financial hardship and lots more. So what do we do? Some of us take preventative methods. We try to protect ourselves as much as possible and most of us worry to a greater or lesser degree.

Organisations also consider safety but their concern is less existential and mostly financial. The worry about being sued or breaking the plethora of laws pertaining to Health and Safety means that the risk assessment of projects takes more and more prominence. Lancashire County Council were warned that they would be fined £5,000 if they put up some road safety equipment, 3ft off the ground, because they didn't have the approved 'ladder training' to comply with the Health and Safety Executive's Working at Height Regulations 2005. (Although their local police force were qualified to go up ladders, the police weren't trained to teach other people how to do so!) [*From The Times August 8, 2007*]

Who can say whether this has had a beneficial effect on our society overall. What are we missing out on because we are so risk averse? Some schools have banned conkers in case children hurt each other. A lifeguard and her husband were prevented from taking their three children into a swimming pool for toddlers because the healthy and safety rules stated there must be one adult for every child.

How many community activities have been stifled, children's trips cancelled at the planning stage because of possible danger? There is a part of us, specially at certain stages in our lives, which seeks danger. It's what's behind all the 'dare games' of childhood. How long will it be before we are not allowed to walk up mountains in case someone falls off? Fatty foods banned in case they cause a heart attack in someone? Bicycles banned, in case someone hurts themselves?

Films and computer games get ever more violent and amusement park rides more daring so that there can be excitement and fear without risk.

Whether or not something 'bad' happens it doesn't help to fear it. Worrying doesn't help anybody. It stops us enjoying what we are doing now and can cause physical illnesses, anxiety, agoraphobia, depression and paranoia.

Imagine if you worried your whole life that your house might get flooded. Every time it rained you thought about it. You didn't buy nice carpets in case they got ruined. You often woke up in the night thinking that maybe you could hear water. The anxiety would lead you to suffer more than someone who actually got flooded!

THE BIBLE HAS a lot of passages relating to anxiety and fear and there is a clear message that it is not helpful or necessary. We are all going to die. We know it is the only thing we are certain about but we try not to think about it, and if we do find out that we have a fatal disease then it's a crisis. There stark fact is that there is no real security in this world.

To think that there is a way to stay safe is an illusion so long as we are attached to this physical life. The only way to truly be safe is to trust in God.

It doesn't mean that God will protect you from physical harm. He may do in some circumstances or He may not. But your trust will allow you into a state of peace, and access to a love that will protect you from spiritual, emotional and mental harm. Fear is a true enemy.

If we trust in God and surrender to his will then we are able to accept what is happening in our life, however 'bad' it seems, and we experience peace. God will remove the fear, maybe not all at once, but transformation will happen. To trust God is true safety.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (*Phillipians Ch 4 v 6*)

For he who loves God with all his heart fears neither death, punishment, judgement, or hell for perfect love enjoys sure access to God. (*Thomas A Kempis - The Imitation of Christ*)

Dazzle us with your dwelling!

Every year the Blackbird Leys estate has an amazing array of Christmas lights on show. This year a competition is being held to find the finest.

There are prizes of up to £100 for the best decorated house, window and garden.

To enter call Sarah Pomroy at Oxford Citizens Housing Association on **01865 773000** or email **sarah.pomroy@ocha.org.uk** by **5pm Friday 14 December**.

Judging on **Wednesday, 19 December**.

Competition sponsored by OCHA, Cherwell Housing Trust, Catalyst Housing and Oxford City Council

OCHA Oxford Citizens Housing Association · dominion Housing Group · Catalyst Communities · Oxford City Council

All the ways you can get involved with Leys News:

1. Write for the paper
We're always looking for writers and people with an eye for a story. For more information contact Kate on 711756 or email editor@leysnews.co.uk

2. Send in your photos

3. Editorial meeting
Tell us what you want to see in the paper. Open to the public - just drop in. Next meeting: 2pm Friday 11th January in the Blackbird Leys Community Centre.

4. Write a letter to us

5. Admin Volunteer
We would love to have a volunteer to help us in the office with general admin work two mornings or afternoons a week. You need to have used computers before but no other experience is necessary. You will benefit by gaining experience and a reference for future paid work and by knowing you have made a contribution to your local community paper.

6. Enter our competitions
You have a very high chance of winning!

7. Become a Director with Leys News.
We have meetings every 6 weeks to make decisions concerning the paper. Local people or members of other community groups are very welcome. For more information contact Anna on 711756 or email officemanager@leysnews.co.uk

8. Become a paid distributor.
If you would like to deliver Leys News every two months give us a call on 711756. You need to be over 14 and have a responsible attitude.

Blackbird Leys Parish Council

Blackbird Leys Parish Council meetings always take place in the Jack Argent Room, Blackbird Leys Community Centre, Blackbird Leys Road. As a resident of Blackbird Leys or Greater Leys, you have the right to attend and hear your representatives make decisions on local issues. If there are any issues about the Leys that you would like to raise at the next meeting, you will need to contact the parish clerk, Helen Shayler, in advance on 01865 734346 or hjcboss@hotmail.co.uk. She will then be able to add your item to the meeting's agenda.

Parish council meetings usually take place on the last Tuesday of the month, but the next meeting varies from this pattern because the last Tuesday in December is Christmas Day. The "Dates for your Diary" section of the Leys News website (www.leysnews.co.uk) always has the date of the next parish council meeting.

. . . Your local representatives . . .

Parish Council

Chairman: Lee Cole
Vice Chair: Gordon Roper
Parish Clerk: Helen Shayler
Non-position holders: Chris Hatton, Rae Humberstone *(see City Council section below)*, Cyril Martin, Ricardo Marshall, Sophia Marshall, Rosemary Morlin, Carol Roberts, Val Smith, Pat Stannard, Gerry Webb, Susan Fitzsimons.

For further details telephone 01865 734346 during office hours of 9am - 5pm, Monday - Friday. Answering service outside office hours.
The mailing address for the Parish Council is 10 Swan Street, Oxford OX29 4HU.

Oxford City Council

Blackbird Leys Ward:
Lee Cole - *Independent Working Class Association*
31 Long Ground, Greater Leys, OX4 7WS, 07886 463580
Surgery: Every Wednesday from 6.30 - 8.30pm at the Clockhouse, Greater Leys.

Rae Humberstone - *Labour*
75 Little Bury, Blackbird Leys, 01865 779678
Email: raehumberstone@btinternet.com
Surgery: 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month at Blackbird Leys Community Centre, 11am - 12pm

Northfield Brook Ward:
Stuart Craft - *Independent Working Class Association*
12 Brocklesby Road, Oxford OX4 4QJ, 07733 274324
Surgery: Every Wednesday from 6.30 - 8.30pm at the Clockhouse, Greater Leys.

Jane Elizabeth Lacey - *Independent Working Class Association*
71 Knights Road, Blackbird Leys, 07947 225297
Surgery: No weekly surgery, but available by telephone

Oxfordshire County Council

Leys & Lye Division:

Val Smith - *Labour*
4 Flaxfield Road, OX4 6QD
01865 305080
Email: val.smith@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Surgery: 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month from 11am - 12pm at Blackbird Leys Community Centre, Blackbird Leys Road

Barbara Gatehouse - *Labour*
51 Ash Grove, Headington
Oxford OX3 9JN
01865 741060
Barbara.gatehouse@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Member of Parliament

Member of Parliament for Oxford East
Andrew Smith - *Labour*
Suite A
21 Templars Square
Cowley
Oxford OX4 2UZ
01865 305080
andrewsmith.mp@virgin.net
Surgery: Every 3rd Friday at the Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre from 3.00pm

OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

WHAT DO AREA COMMITTEES DO?

The six Area Committees are responsible for the following:

Abandoned vehicles, allotments, cemeteries, decisions on planning applications, dog wardens, ditches and streams, public toilets, car parks, parks & countryside management, street cleaning, street naming, community centres.

SOUTH EAST AREA COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

Monday 3rd December
Blackbird Leys Community Centre
6.30pm

Monday 7th January
Cardinal House, Littlemore
6.30pm

Monday 4th February
Cardinal House, Littlemore
6.30pm

Ring 01865 252249 for further information

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For information call

Barton Pool	01865 467290	Hinksey Pool (May-Sep)	01865 467079
Blackbird Leys Leis. Cnt.	01865 467020	Oxford Ice Rink	01865 467002
Blackbird Leys Pool	01865 467004	Peers Sports Centre	01865 467095
Ferry Sports Centre	01865 467060	Temple Cowley Pools	01865 467124